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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2018

TAGS: PREL GG RS CA

SUBJECT: CANADA UNLIKELY TO RAISE ABKHAZIA AND SOUTH OSSETIA WITH RUSSIA, FOR NOW

REF: A. STATE 40673

1B. USUN 378

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) In response to ref a demarche by PolMinCouns, Director General for Central, East, and South Europe Robert Hage of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) confirmed on April 25 that Canada remained unlikely -- for the time being, at least -- directly to raise Russia's creeping annexation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia with Moscow. He said that he had met recently in Europe with EU counterparts to discuss Central Asian issues, and there had been considerable speculation that Russia's desire for the smooth success of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi (which he described as only 10 km from Abkhazia) would already provide a natural brake on Russia's activities. He commented that the minority status of the current Canadian government made it especially unwilling to undertake many new such initiatives.

12. (C) Hage promised that DFAIT would nonetheless keep the issue under careful observation, and would reconsider the utility of formally raising the issue with Russia especially if and when an already twice canceled Russian Ministerial visit (to examine the site of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler) took place after the formation of the new government in Moscow next month.

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